

**Hays County Master Naturalists
Board Meeting
March 1, 2012
Camp Jacob, Wimberley**

In attendance:

Larry Calvert
Anne Child
Chris Middleton
Beth Ramey
Jeff Vasgaard
Lin Weber
Herb Smith
Art Arizpe
Helen Bowie
Leah Laszewski
Eva Gomez

Not present:

Becky Northcut
Lee Ann Linam
Richard Parrish
Charles Maxcy
Tom Hausler

The meeting was called to order at 6:40PM.

Eva Gomez made a motion to approve the minutes with one modification that had already been made. Lin Weber seconded the motion and the minutes were approved.

Larry Calvert began the meeting by stressing the importance of reporting hours in that the total number of hours reported in a given year is an important component of federal matching grant applications.

The question of liability waivers was discussed and some participants cited volunteer projects such as Onion Creek where the City of Austin requires volunteers to sign such a waiver. It was agreed that Hays Master Naturalist should probably have a blanket liability waiver covering all activities.

Action Item: Larry Calvert agreed to follow up with the state organization to see if they have a standard waiver. If not, the next step will be to get a lawyer who will draw one up.

A concern had been raised that, because the speaker at the next chapter meeting would be discussing his book, it might not qualify as Advanced Training. It was agreed that as long as the speaker did not use the occasion to promote his book, but rather to talk about identifying animals, the event would qualify as Advanced Training. It was also suggested that some members of the Hill Country Photography Club might be interested in attending the talk.

Action Item: Anne Child agreed to follow up with the speaker regarding what we expected from his talk.

Action Item: Art Arizpe agreed to initiate an invitation to the Hill Country Photography Club.

Action Item: Helen Bowie agreed to check with the planned location to insure a screen is available for the presentation.

Beth Ramey reported that she had sent out a copy of the budget report and that the current balance was \$13,176.38 with 117 paid members to date. She also reported that one donation confirmation letter had been sent and another would go out next week. She also discussed the development of a list of Master Naturalist assets. It was suggested that the list should include contact information regarding who is currently storing the asset which would eventually become a private web page on the new website.

Action Item: Beth Ramey said she would send e-mail to the board in order to start the process of gathering information regarding Master Naturalist assets.

The upcoming Butterfly Festival was discussed. Mel Seib will recruit volunteers for all activities (seed balls and the aquifer, watershed, and rainwater models. But she has requested that Leah Laszewski recruit more people to specifically promote the Master Naturalist program.

Lin Weber reported that, while 38 people had been accepted into this year's training program, one can't go so the class will have 37 participants. She also reported on the first class and discussed plans for subsequent ones.

Beth Ramey reported that as of February 22nd, 370 volunteer hours and 116 hours of advanced training had been reported.

Action Item: Christine Middleton agreed to send out quarterly reminders for reporting hours. The first quarter reminder will be sent out on March 20th and will set the cutoff date at April 6th.

Becky Northcut was absent so discussion of the new website was tabled until the next board meeting.

Art Arizpe thanked those who had contributed to the March newsletter and discussed the upcoming Naturescapes photography contest. Jeff Vasguard made a motion that the Master Naturalist program again jointly sponsored with the Hill Country Photography Club and donate \$300 donated to help fund the effort. Further an additional \$75 is to be designated for awards with categories to be determined by the photography club. Leah Laszewski seconded the motion and it was approved unanimous.

Leah Laszewski discussed the Outreach Committee Meeting that had taken place the previous night and discussed the goals the group had set for this year as follow:

- Expand the school program to one more school,
- Identify events appropriate for a Master Naturalist booth,
- Get the speaker's bureau up and running,
- Purchase and create new display materials,
- Find a voice in the local press possibly through a monthly column,
- Partner with local libraries starting with a display of some kind.

While not in attendance, Charles Maxcy sent a report on his progress in gathering historical information on the Master Naturalist program. In particular he is in the process of gathering history from members of the first few classes. He is also putting together a spreadsheet of previous officers. Much of the information he is gathering will eventually find its way to the new website.

Art Arizpe said that he had examined the 15 projects with no hours for 2011 and as a result 11 have been delisted. There are now 53 projects with updated contact information. It was suggested that once a year the projects be reviewed and that the burden be split across all members of the board. It was also agreed that calendars should be probably be the top priority when work on the new website begins.

Action Item: Although he was not at the meeting, Tom Hausler was given an action item asking that he jot down procedures for getting things on the calendar and added to the web page.

Action Item: Art Arizpe will send an e-mail to project leaders asking them to submit information to Tom Hausler.

Action Item: Herb Smith will touch base with Michelle Haggerty to determine when we will get access to the new website.

Action Item: Larry Calvert will contact Becky Northcut to be sure she is at the next meeting so we can discuss the new website.

Leah Laszewski moved to adjourn the meeting and Lin Weber seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:25PM.